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The Cheapening of Religion

By James O. Fagan

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BY

JAMES O. FAGAN

NEW-CHURCH BOARD OF PUBLICATION
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THROUGH the courtesy of the author and of the ATLANTIC MONTHLY, this frank analysis of present-day tendencies in the propaganda work of the Christian Church, published in that magazine October, 1910, is here presented in more enduring form.

The appropriateness of such republication by a New-Church publishing house will be understood by those in any way familiar with the fundamental conceptions of life enunciated in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. For those not thus familiar, there may be quoted the following from the *New-Church Messenger* (the leading American Swedenborgian weekly periodical), clearly indicating an unequivocal stand upon the platform for which Mr. Fagan now pleads:

"The New Church stands pre-eminently for the spiritual. Its immediate present-day function is so to order its resources and conduct its uses that amid the wide weltering chaos of skepticism, naturalism, worldliness and impiety which characterize the inner life of our age, man shall nevertheless have the means of thinking more rationally, of

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feeling more intensely, of acting more fruitfully in respect to heavenly things than ever before in the history of the world.

"The intellectual and practical grasp by a Church and its people of the facts of our Lord's Divine Humanity, of the Spiritual Second Advent, of the unfolded internal sense of the Word, and of the tangible reality of the spiritual world, is the self-evident qualification for such a ministry of truth and consequent charity as will effectually provide that the Divine shall be among men."

The Cheapening of Religion

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I

IN this, as in every generation, the most important human interests are personal and spiritual. A celebrated preacher once said that God's purpose on earth is not truth, but man. In view of present intellectual standards and tendencies this statement has a peculiar significance. It touches the heart of all social problems.

For example, the most momentous social fact of the twentieth century is, probably, the rise of the working man.

His destiny is the next consideration. While his material success is assured, his spiritual outlook and intentions are somewhat obscured. To an almost inconceivable extent, and before long, dominion and power are to be his, and in this connection one of the most hopeful signs of the times is the present unrest of this worker and his consequent effort educationally and industrially to improve his conditions.

This social unrest, however, is not confined to industrial circles. It is also the most hopeful religious or spiritual sign. At no time in the history of this continent has the spiritual element in the churches and elsewhere been so thoroughly aroused to a sense of its responsibility and oppor-

tunity. For the church to sever its spiritual connection with the masses is to court isolation. On the other hand, to bolster its influence with the people by methods other than spiritual is an alternative that is foredoomed to defeat. And yet this alternative, which means the descent of religion and the cheapening of its ideals, is a boldly advertised feature of only too many church programmes, whose avowed intention it is to keep up with what they consider to be the spirit of the times.

To illustrate the effect of this cheapening of religious thought on the progress and religious ideals of modern society, let us first take the word religion in all its old-time simplicity and significance.

To begin with, I think it will be allowed that originally, or at least once upon a time, this term religion was by right of almost universal usage the exclusive property and copyright of religious people, that is to say of people, regardless of faith or denomination, whose chief concern was the spiritual, and not directly the material, welfare of the human race. To be still more explicit, there certainly was a time when the word religion was not applied to scientific or socialistic systems of social betterment. The term was taken to mean simply and solely the conscious relation between man and God, and the expression of that relation in human conduct. As such, it was a designation or emblem wide enough

to take in men and women of almost every conceivable spiritual inclination and calibre.

So far as Christians are concerned, and according to its original significance, the term was intended strictly to represent the spiritual function in human affairs, namely, "To develop the moral instincts of children, to fortify the character of the young against temptation, to cherish love of justice and human brotherhood, and to encourage the capacity for self-sacrifice."

It matters little that, in all countries and in every generation, grievous mistakes have been made in the name of religion. The flags of the most civilized nations are subject to the same criticism.

Consequently, this word religion, standing on its pedestal from age to age with its central idea of spiritual service, should have been guarded by Christian people with zealous solicitude, and its original significance should have been retained, unmixed with other issues, however popular and praiseworthy.

At the present day, however, no one would dream of claiming any such exclusive interpretation for the word religion. In fact, the term, shorn for the most part of its original significance, is now at the service of anybody who is able to bring into popular notice a plausible proposition in social or industrial betterment work. The churches themselves, and more particularly what are

known as the liberal churches, have thrown the word into the literary scrap-heap, have invited all manner of well-meaning people, or associations of well-meaning people, to make use of the word as they think fit, and to attach it to all manner of ethical, scientific, or socialistic systems by means of which future races may be more thoroughly washed, fed, housed, measured, and enlightened. This to-day is the exact status of the word religion, which at one time was the exclusive property and word-emblem of spiritually-minded people.

At this point, the writer simply calls attention to this change in the significance of the word, and specifically to a number of well-defined evolutionary fea-

tures that are following closely in its train: namely, to the scattering and mystifying of the religious conceptions of people, especially of the rising generation; to a certain, and very noticeable, cheapening of religious thought in the community; and finally, to a tendency to do away with religious observance, and to convert religion itself into a guess of constantly diminishing importance.

To people who frequent the byways of city life, who listen to and make note of conversations, and who read the newspapers, in which, as a rule, religion is only referred to in parentheses or humourously,—to such people, I say, the indications I have mentioned are the widely-advertised signs of the times. The

evolutionary history of this state of affairs, and the illustrations connected with it are extremely interesting. But now, in order to illuminate the discussion a little, a short historical retrospection becomes necessary.

II

Roughly speaking, between the years 1880 and 1890 there was a period of great educational and intellectual activity in America. It was by no means a pious upheaval of the human mind, but a sort of awakening to a sense of great intellectual riches and prospects. People in crowds, as it were, became half intoxicated with programmes of social and scientific possibilities. In al-

most every town and city in the country, lecture bureaus and "Star courses" were at the height of their popularity and usefulness. Right along, through this interesting period, a revered and commanding personality was exercising a powerful influence on the religious life of the people of New England. It was an influence essentially religious and ennobling, yet the doctrines were widely tolerant in the best sense of the term. The key-note to this man's preaching was contained in the fundamental understanding that the immediate obstacles to right living lie in our minds, and not in our circumstances. That is to say, it was a personal religion, founded on a spiritual basis.

The writer cannot recall the exact date,

but on a certain New Year's Eve the man I refer to, the late Phillips Brooks, preached a sermon to the Young Men's Christian Union in Boston. His subject was the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, or the duties and responsibilities of the Christian soldier. The writer was so much impressed with the religious conceptions propounded by Dr. Brooks in this remarkable sermon, that he sought an interview with the preacher for the purpose of expressing his deep appreciation. Recalling the conversation as best I can, I trust that I do not misinterpret his words, or their significance, when I say that with hearty interest in all social and economic problems for the improvement of material conditions, and with

the greatest sympathy for the opinions of all right-minded people, Dr. Brooks yet held religion to be the consecrated force by means of which all human activities should be inspired and directed along spiritual lines; or, as some one else has expressed it, religion should be depended upon "to supply the extra-mundane motive stimulating men to the performance of their duties."

In short, while religion has a mission, it has also privileges and powers and *a clearly defined sphere of action.* The writer came away from this interview impressed with the idea that, in the opinion of Dr. Brooks, it was by no means necessary for religion to apologize for its place in society, or for its

services to humanity, nor was it either proper or expedient for ministers of religion to subordinate or side-track their spiritual functions in favor of popular or scientific theories, however praiseworthy.

Here, as it seems to the writer, in the religion of Phillips Brooks was a positive yet flexible starting-point from which people of all religious denominations and ethical systems might well agree to take their bearings. The entirely religious yet tolerant ideas of Dr. Brooks were extremely popular, practically speaking, with all classes in the community in which he labored; but in order to perpetuate rules of faith or conduct to which, let it be noted, there is attached a suspicion of

discipline, the inspiration and actual presence of great personalities is called for. Since the days of Dr. Brooks, however, no single preacher or school of preachers has in any emphatic way taken up his work, and followed in his footsteps, with anything approaching his intensity or directness of spiritual purpose. Too many of them nowadays are even inclined to apologize for introducing spirituality into human affairs until some kind of social justice has been secured.

This over-keen sense, in fine and conscientious minds, of "the burden of the universe" leads to great timidity in spiritual circles. Consequently the great non-religious world is inclined to look upon

the modern minister as a weakling. If it does, the fault lies in the ministers themselves. When Phillips Brooks preached his sermon on the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, he was addressing the ministers of his time, as well as the young men of the Christian Union. Brave men and true of course there are to-day, but among the best of them spirituality seems to be losing its militant qualities. In order to bridge rivers, tunnel cities, navigate the air, fight pestilence, and destroy the slums, it is agreed that man must struggle, scheme, and dare. These noble lines of human endeavor call for champions, but as it appears to the writer of this article, spirituality in America, instead of arming

knights, is now enjoying a humdrum existence in the seclusion of comfortable parishes.

It is true many worthy ministers are in the open, fighting bravely for every conceivable kind of reform in social and religious life; but more and more the modern religious reformer is wandering from the basic principle of personal character and redemption, and the leaders of this radical and speculative school of modern religious thought are now seeking the greatest material happiness for the greatest number, along channels and by methods to which the writer now desires to direct attention. That there may be no misunderstanding as to this radical tendency and its meaning

it will be well to quote authority and adduce concrete illustration.

III

I have said that the so-called liberal preachers of the day have agreed to cast the word religion into the literary scrap-heap. To some people this fact will have but little significance; but when we come to examine the matter closely, we will get some idea of the cheapening of religious thought by which this change has been accompanied.

That the agreement to materialize religion and its meaning is spreading, and becoming very popular, can easily be demonstrated. Even the Roman Catho-

lics here and there are being drawn into the current.

In a communication read at the conference at Edinburgh, on June 17, 1910, the Catholic Bishop of Cremona, Italy, gives "due recognition" to the many elements of truth and value in several non-Christian systems of religion and ethics, although in the same breath he adds, "But we should be unfaithful to the facts of experience if we did not reaffirm our conviction that the education of the world demands for its highest and best development those elements of truth which are the peculiar contributions of Christianity to the world's thought and life."

But an illustration nearer home will

be more to the point. In a book entitled, *The Coming Religion*, published in the year 1893, Rev. Thomas Van Ness applies the term religion to three clearly defined systems of philosophical thought, to which at that time the earnest attention of thinking people was directed, as it is now, for that matter. These systems of religion are "The Christian, the Scientific, and the Humanitarian, with their gospels of love, evolution, and socialism."

In commenting on conditions and prospects, Mr. Van Ness describes the situation very clearly. He speaks of "the three religions battling for supremacy in the Christian world," and puts the question to his readers: "Which

of the three is to become supreme? Is not our religion," he adds, "perfect, as it is measured by the standards of its sincere believers?" The book in question, the author explains, "was written to answer this question in the negative."

Now, it is not necessary to dwell on the obvious distinction between the all-embracing personal service contained in the doctrines and faith of Dr. Brooks, and the religion of the future, which, in the mind's eye of Mr. Van Ness, is to be a sort of alliance or reconciliation between science, socialism, and Christianity. This is to-day a common and very acceptable doctrine. It is popular with liberal thinkers and hosts of people, and yet to the mind of the

present writer, it means to Christianity and the spiritual life of the nation what the partition of Poland meant to the Poles.

The alliance in question, in all its complications, is becoming more and more the popular interpretation of religious probabilities. The most advanced views on the subject, leaving out a good deal of the socialism, with a quite graphic description of the promised land connected with it, are very clearly outlined in the well-known treatise on *The Religion of the Future*, by Dr. Charles W. Eliot.

The present writer, however, is not now concerned with horoscopes and predictions. He invites his readers to ex-

amine the situation for themselves, and to see just how this proposed alliance between socialism and science on the one hand, and a large, influential, and well-meaning section of Christian workers on the other, pursues its ends and carries on its campaign. To a great extent it is a picture of spirituality and spiritual teachers backing out and losing ground under pressure from below. What follows is some of the writing on the wall.

IV

During the period to which I have referred, when Phillips Brooks was preaching to all sorts and conditions of men his great doctrines of love, spirituality, and

personal service, and when at the same time from forum and platform messages of great human and scientific interest were being delivered to enthusiastic audiences, a young minister stepped out of the ranks, as it were, and proclaimed to the people of New England the dawn of a new era, or rather, the breaking of new ground in methods of religious teaching. For, after all, his message was neither new nor strange. But the man had personality. He was burdened with an idea. He was enthusiastic, honest, eloquent, and strong. From the start people took him seriously. The newspapers "featured" him, and he began to draw crowds. Sunday after Sunday he filled Tremont Temple in

Boston to the doors. From a full heart he preached the ever virile doctrine of human brotherhood.

But the spiritual impetus that was at the root of his humanitarian ideas was, to the better educated among his hearers, its most attractive feature. Although the spiritual element in his audiences was in the minority, the preacher's standing on the subject added greatly to his popularity and to the quiet dignity of the services, and hundreds of regular church-goers from all over the state became frequent attendants at these meetings.

As time passed, interest in the movement increased, but, as it seemed to the writer, in response to the popular

demand of a mixed audience, more emphasis began to be laid on the social, industrial, and human-brotherhood features of the programme. The idea of the spiritual origin and backing of the movement seemed to be losing ground, and before long, in the natural course of events, sermons on social justice were reinforced and illustrated by the teaching of science and the doctrines of socialism.

In this way, one thing leading to another, the Christian Church itself was brought up for consideration. There is no mistaking the outside popular view of this matter. If the religious liberal loses sight of it, he will get out of touch with his popular audience. And thus

the minister in question, forgetting the Christian endeavor of centuries, held up, religiously speaking, his own flesh and blood to popular animadversion for its mistakes in the past, and its lethargy in the present. Perhaps he was right; in my opinion he was wrong; but leaving the ultimate good to the community an open question, the fact remains that he, this minister, had now joined the ranks of those who were cheapening religious traditions and thought.

Meanwhile the sermons were becoming immensely entertaining, and the ever-increasing radicalism and religious independence of the preacher continued to be received with marked applause by crowded audiences.

In this way, as it seemed to the writer recording his honest impressions, the preacher discovered the most popular element in his teaching, his visions of doing good were guided thereby, and thus he began to get a glimpse of the fascinating life-work that was before him.

The man, by this time, was a distinct power in the community. Apart from his regular religious services in Tremont Temple and elsewhere, he started a "forum" in the interests of young men, in the Parker Memorial Building in Boston, for the freest possible discussion of social and industrial problems, and in particular of the doctrines of human rights and socialism.

Without exaggeration, hundreds of young men of thoughtful and religious tendencies were attracted to this platform which represented and encouraged the discussion of topics of such vital human interest. The moving spirits in this forum, the regular attendants and most interested debaters, were drawn from the churches. Without any reference to the merits of the case, it will have to be allowed that few, if any, of these young men ever returned to the churches from which they came.

But now mark the event.

The work of the forum and of the movement itself came to an end after two or three very successful seasons, not from lack of interest or attendance, but

from the deliberate action and *test* of the founder himself. When the time came he put the case to his audience in so many words, very much as follows; at any rate this is the impression his remarks left on his hearers. "My friends," he said in effect, "we have now come to the parting of the ways. You have followed me kindly and courageously this many a day. What I am and what I teach, you should all thoroughly understand by this time. And specifically about religion you are particularly well posted, and my views on the subject I have not withheld from you. But now it is our manifest duty to take account of stock, to look forward as well as backward, and thus I now want

to know something about results and the future. My religion, the doctrine I have preached, you understand, is founded on human justice, the brotherhood of man, the revelations and truths of science, and finally as much of the Christian religion as, in good faith and reasonably, we can admit into the partnership.

"With these ideas in our minds, and along these lines, I now propose to institute here in Boston a great brotherly congregation of Christian workers. To begin with, I ask you all to think the matter over carefully, and later, when our arrangements shall have been completed, I shall ask you to put your hands in your pockets, and give the movement some tangible evidence of your

appreciation of my sojourn and labors among you. In a word, we must now have a regular constitution and a home to worship in. The question remains, Is this alliance of ours between Science, Socialism, and the Christian Religion good for it?"

To describe the situation more definitely, the city of Boston was thoroughly canvassed in behalf of the project. Those who had manifested any interest in the work were then invited to assist the committees. A form of pledge, promising financial assistance, was printed and circulated, and finally a mass meeting of regular attendants and well-wishers was held one Sunday evening in the Hollis Street Theatre.

The building was crowded to the doors. If my recollection of the affair is correct, the services of an expert were secured for the financial aspect of the undertaking. The duties of this gentleman consisted in the reading of a financial report, in announcing the amounts of the pledges, and finally, by means of a stirring appeal, in arousing the enthusiasm of the audience to the requisite money-giving pitch.

In this way the best part of an hour was consumed; but when the sum total of the pledges was read out, it was found to be sadly disappointing. The minister, however, made the best of it. It remained for him to announce his plans for the future with such limited

financial support. He promised to think it over. He had received a very flattering call from a society in California. He must not forget that. He thanked kind friends for their support and generosity, and then he gave his topic for the evening: "Why I believe in Immortality."

Now, in the present article neither the teachings of science nor the doctrines of socialism are up for consideration. The issue is simply the effect, or probable effect, of the alliance I have been describing on the spiritual life of the community. And from this point of view I think it fair to conclude that the movement which culminated, or rather disbanded, in the Hollis Street Theatre, cost the churches some two or three

hundred regular attendants. The doctrines of personal religion and spirituality in general lost a great deal of ground. At the end there was no religious or any other cohesion, and the great audience in the Hollis Street Theatre represented a medley of social and philosophical opinions, drawn together by a single personality, and finally thrown back on the community to shift for themselves.

The characteristic feature and result of this movement, whether for better or worse, was simply its *homelessness*, and every movement of this description in the churches, from that day to this, has in the end, and in a similar way, resolved itself into a society for the turning-out of religious vagrants.

This applies to ministers and laymen alike. This making of religious vagrants is, to say the least of it, a very noticeable feature and sequence of the progressive religious sentiment of the day. In listening to an up-to-date sermon of this description, one finds it is frequently ninety-eight per cent political and socialistic, and two per cent spiritual.

The ultimate result to such churches can be imagined. It will repay us to give a little attention to the language used upon such occasions by prominent liberal preachers in the year 1910. Of course this kind of doctrine cannot yet be taken as typical of the situation in liberal religious circles, but it is by far

the most extensively advertised and applauded feature of the situation.

Quite recently, in Boston, large audiences of Unitarians and their friends were addressed by ministers of that denomination, during anniversary week. The attitude of the church toward politics, labor problems, and social justice was the topic that aroused the keenest interest, and the addresses thereon were most extensively reported in the newspapers. The enthusiasm of audiences was repeatedly aroused by such sentiments as the following uttered by prominent speakers:—

"This money power has invaded and captured the Republican party. This money power has invaded our colleges

and universities, and told their heads what they can teach."

According to this minister, the church should preach politics and socialism from the pulpit. He himself had no hesitation in setting the example. The church, his own church, is conspicuously weak and inefficient. Its plain duty is to denounce the money power, the Republican party, and the railroads. In regard to the latter, an audience was informed that "The beast in the east masquerades under the name of the Boston and Maine Railroad, and it is one of the corrupting influences in the east."

Parenthetically there is about one ounce of vanishing truth in this statement,

and a ton of gross misrepresentation. Any one of its thousands of employees could have informed the speaker what the Boston and Maine Railroad and its management stand for to-day, socially, educationally, and industrially. As for the past—let the dead bury its dead.

According to these speakers, however, the greatest offender is the church itself. Its stand on economic and social questions is the centre of attack. The church is accused of being "long on salvation somewhere else, and mighty short of it here." One speaker, relating his experience and opinion, had this to say: "I saw a congregation of people who would sing and who would talk about the brotherhood of man, but

who would resent any attempt to make that brotherhood possible."

"Where save in the church would you find buyers of legislatures?" he inquired. "Where save in the church will you find the owners of foul tenements that kill the people who are compelled to live in them?"

The moral effect of this kind of sermonizing, advertised as it has been all over the country, is simply to bring all churches and every form of religious teaching into disrepute with the people. Not only is its tendency to initiate and encourage dissatisfaction and vagrancy in religious circles, not only are its accusations often exaggerated, but its very aims are themselves founded

on error and misconception. This final and most important phase of the situation should be clearly explained and understood.

V

One of the chief of these misconceptions relates to the function and duties of the Christian minister, and to the understanding or misunderstanding of Christian endeavor in all parts of the world in times past. The modern religious reformer, in thinking that he can fill the rôle of a political partisan or a corporation-baiter, and at the same time expect to remain on a spiritual eminence and direct the conscience of

even a small congregation, is making a great mistake.

Personally this action of his may be commendable; he may be peculiarly fitted for this kind of work; nevertheless, it must be to him a fundamental change of occupation.

The position of the writer on the matter can be stated in the words of Phillips Brooks: "God's purpose on the earth is man, and the primary and final concern of the Christian minister is human character." This religious programme is not only all a Christian minister can reasonably be expected to attend to, but, as we shall see later, it includes, and always has included, social justice and betterment work of

every description. Let us first emphasize this position or sphere of duty a little.

The Reverend Frederick A. Bisbee, editor of the *Universalist Leader* of Boston, in his baccalaureate sermon at the University of Maine some time ago, called attention to the part played by religion in the present great drama of life.

"The great need of the world," he said, "is not more laws, not more schemes for human betterment, but more of just plain, good, true men. The best office in the world will fail unless you have good men to administer it. Every social system ever instituted has met wreck because of the failure of the individual man in it. All our evils, so-

cial, economic, and political, have their primary cause in evil men, often men of talent and training. The only way to reform the world is to reform the men in it."

Here, then, is the religious proposition of to-day actually more insistent and more clearly defined than ever. This is the prescribed sphere of action of the Christian minister. It is orthodox, liberal, and catholic. But the American genius is averse to restrictions of any kind, and the fever in the blood is now running its course through the churches.

Let us take a glance at this now popular movement in perhaps its latest manifestation.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States, for example, with its one million three hundred thousand members, has recently issued a sort of manifesto on the subject. The document was reported to the assembly at Atlantic City, by Reverend John McDowell, D.D., and adopted with unanimity. Its terms call upon the church to declare itself specifically on certain social, moral, and industrial issues. It is true Jesus approached the social question from within. He dealt with individuals; he made men. he served the world through inspiration; he left the organization of social and industrial details to the individual who listened to and profited by his teachings, But the Presbyterian and other Protestant

churches now propose to go further. The time has come, they declare, "when our churches and ministers must speak their minds concerning particular problems now threatening society."

To begin with, then, let it now be preached that "All wealth, from whatever source acquired, must be held or administered as a trust from God for fellow men." The church must declare, too, for the application of Christian principles in the conduct of industrial organizations, whether of capital or labor; for a more equal distribution of wealth; and for the abatement of poverty. Furthermore, the church must stand for the abolition of child-labor. Provision must be made to relieve from

want those who, through no fault of their own, now suffer the brunt of losses incurred in the service of society as a whole. The church must also have an eye on and a hand in regulating the condition of the industrial occupation of women. She must declare for the protection of working people from dangerous machinery, and for adequate insurance; and finally, "The pay of every worker for six days' work"—the church must see to it—"should be made sufficient for the needs of seven days of living."

Evidently these issues and interests are of the greatest importance, both to the churches and to the nation at large. The proposition from beginning to end

does credit to the religious instinct and human sympathies of any church.

The principles concerned in the programme are all right, but in the working out of its details there is a peck of trouble, for both minister and church. But the churches have always preached and acknowledged the principles of social justice, on a level, at any rate, with the times. What they now propose to do is to step down into the social arena and take sides. Once in the arena there is no help for it. The minister must come out for the open shop or against it. He must be socialist or anti-socialist. Sooner or later he must be female suffragist or anti-suffragist. He must come out for an eight-hour

day or against it. Meanwhile, under these circumstances, his congregation being human, only a man-miracle could retain his spiritual jurisdiction.

In fact to saddle the modern minister with even a subordinate part in the organization and solution of these problems of social justice is simply preposterous.

President Eliot of the American Unitarian Association is evidently of this opinion. He does not believe that "one man can be a theologian, a sociologist, a raiser of church income, and a pastor with sufficient skill to make himself acceptable to an intelligent and critical congregation."

This is the situation in a nutshell.

Let the minister choose whom he will serve. Let him specialize; and seeing that the primal and final concern of the Christian minister is human character, let him specialize at his own business, and stand to his guns.

The churches to-day are as well aware of these facts, and of this situation, as the writer of this article. But, unfortunately, at the present day they are suffering from a simple case of Christian timidity or fright. Deep in its heart the church is aware of its spiritual mission, but the incessant haranguing of the popular reformer, and various other pressures from without, are eating into its faith, and it now seems to be possessed with a determination

to part with no small portion of its spiritual function, in order to acquire an uncertain partnership in affairs over which its influence is comparatively slight.

But this religious misconception is not alone one of function and duty. At the root of nearly all modern projects, or tendencies, to materialize religion, there is also a misinterpretation of church history and antecedents. For if there is any one thing to-day of which the churches have reason to be proud, it is the record of Christian endeavor and success along the very lines to which popular attention is now being directed.

In reading the programme and an-

nounced platform of the Presbyterian Church, one gets the idea that this denomination is becoming interested in these social and industrial problems for the first time. Nothing can be further from the truth. The past and present glory of the Christian Church does not consist in the lists of social and industrial cure-alls which it has officially sanctioned and proclaimed from the housetops. While others have been thus engaged, the individuals, the children and fruits of the church's ministry, the "just plain, good, true men and women," have been at work, and have crowded into the past fifty years a record of actual results in humanitarian efforts which, properly understood, should fill

the faintest religious heart with courage and gladness.

It is only necessary to study these reforms, the names of the reformers, and the associations connected with them, to understand that in a vast majority of cases the great work of human uplift has been initiated and carried on "In His Name," and in faithful response to the injunction, "This commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another."

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